



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Book Reviews.

Die Geschichtlichkeit des Sinaibundes, untersucht von DR. FRIEDRICH GIESEBRECHT. Königsberg: Thomas & Oppermann, 1900. Pp. 65. M. 1.20.

Professor Giesebrecht, well known through his *Beiträge zur Jesaia-kritik* (1890) and his excellent commentary on Jeremiah,¹ furnishes in this study an admirable treatment of an important question. The objections to the historicity of the narrative concerning the making of a covenant at Sinai are stated fully and fairly. They may be summarized as (1) those relating to the narrative itself, *e. g.*, (*a*) its mythical elements, (*b*) lack of reference to the event in the earliest literature, (*c*) discrepancies in the three forms of the narrative, *viz.*, Exod., chaps. 20-24, 34; and Deut., chap. 5; (2) those relating to the historico-religious significance of the event, *e. g.*, (*a*) the contention that the relation between Yahweh and Israel was a *natural* one, just like that between Chemosh and Moab, or Milcom and Ammon, there being no trace of a covenant between them; (*b*) the lofty ideals of Amos remained the property of a few choice spirits, as they could not have done had they been based upon a well-known covenant made at Sinai; (*c*) the covenant idea was the *result* of the prophetic teaching, not its cause.

In reply to the first class of objections Giesebrecht urges (1) that the presence of mythical elements in a narrative does not necessarily discredit the central event which it describes, as, *e. g.*, the account of the crossing of the Red Sea; (2) that even the most thoroughgoing analysts admit the presence of a covenant narrative in the preprophetic basis of Exod., chaps. 24 and 34; (3) that the slight mention of this important event in the early literature is due to (*a*) the fact that the historians had little occasion to refer to this distant event, (*b*) the absence of any literature from the older prophets, (*c*) the constant efforts made by priests and prophets to adapt the Torah to the ever-changing conditions and needs of the nation which led the people to look to the living Torah rather than to a revelation from the dead past; (4) that, while there are inconsistencies as to details in the

¹ NOWACK, *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, III. Abth., 2. Band, 1894.

accounts of the covenant, yet the fact of the covenant itself remains untouched.

In meeting the second class of objections especial attention is called to the impossibility of explaining the origin of the ethical monotheism of Amos on the basis of the supposition that the relation between Yahweh and Israel was merely a natural one. If Yahweh was just like the gods of the surrounding nations, it would have been more natural for his people either to have regarded him as inferior to the gods of the Assyrians, by whom he was beaten, or to have thought of him as having temporarily returned in wrath to Sinai, his original home. But instead of this they made him a world-ruler; this is to be explained by the fact that (1) there were forerunners of Amos; he was not an isolated phenomenon, but found starting-points for his great ideas in the teachings of his predecessors, viz., Elijah, Micah ben Imlah, the primitive history found in J and E, and the work of Moses; (2) Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from Egypt had given Israel an extremely high conception of his power and greatness, which had been strengthened by the events connected with the conquest of Canaan, and by the victories and glories of the reigns of David and Solomon. It was in the enthusiasm of this new conception of their God that came to them at the time of the exodus that they pledged themselves anew to his service in the covenant at Sinai. In this exalted idea of Yahweh lay the germ of all the later development. The religion of Israel was thus in two important respects different from that of its neighbors: (1) it went back to a positive basis, not a natural one; (2) in the most ancient times it had a conception of God as a being of unlimited power.

It is in this presentation of the antecedents of the monotheistic tendencies of Amos that Professor Giesebrecht does his best work. He rightly lays much emphasis upon facts of Israel's religion that have been neglected for the most part by modern writers, and furnishes us the best reply yet made to the extreme views of Wellhausen, Kraetzschmar, Marti, and others who entirely repudiate the account of the transaction at Sinai. In one point the position of the author is not clear, namely, the relation of Yahweh to Israel before the exodus; had it been a natural relation, and was it made an ethical one by the great deliverance? Or had it always been of an ethical character?

JOHN M. P. SMITH.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.